

Underwater Archaeology

Slave ships and the slave trade

Dr Jane Webster



TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

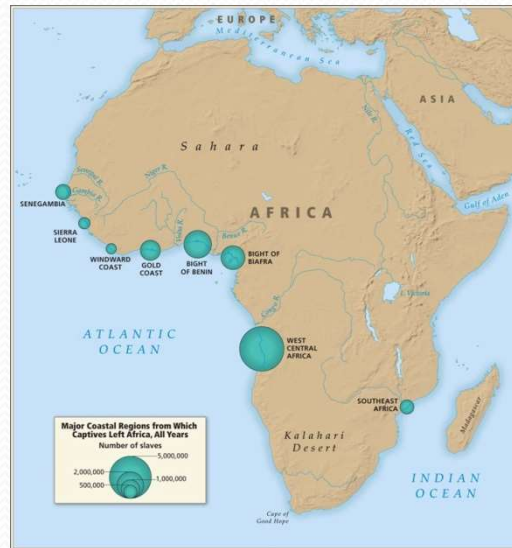
1. To understand what underwater archaeology is
2. To look at artefacts recovered from the *Henrietta Marie*
3. To understand how slave shipwrecks can help with our study of the transatlantic slave trade
4. To explore what the voyage on a slave ship (the 'middle passage') was like for captives



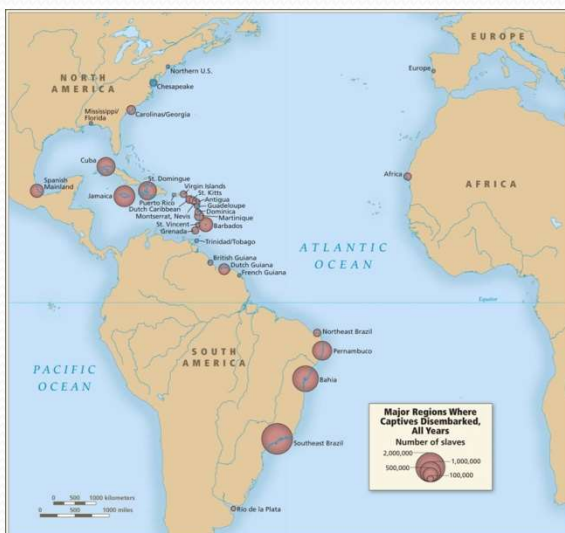


The slave trade 'triangle': Which three continents did the slave ship visit?

The Transatlantic Slave Trade



- 12.5 million people carried away from Africa
- 1.8 million people died on 'Middle Passage' (the journey from Africa to the Americas)
- Britain played a really BIG part in the slave trade
- **3.2m Africans** were carried on British ships— mostly to the Caribbean
- Britain **WORLD LEADER** of the slave trade 1750-1807



This video about the
French Slave ship
Aurore will help you
to understand the key
features of ships used
in the slave trade

<https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/ship>



- **Almost 1000 slave ships were wrecked at sea**
- **So there are lots of wrecks to find....**
- **BUT underwater archaeology is very expensive to do**
- **Only a few slave ships have been found and studied by underwater archaeologists**





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYaOUO46zVY>

A short clip about underwater archaeology



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fgzGX-pPYiM>

Another short clip about underwater
archaeology



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjqIOGp3yGY>

This is not a slave ship, but the video will give you a really good sense of what it's like being an underwater archaeologist.

THE HENRIETTA MARIE



Sank 35 miles off Key West, Florida in 1700



Commemorating the *Henrietta Marie*:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2fYUoSJybc>



"The story ends in 1700 for this particular ship, but the story of what the ship represented continues today," he says. "The importance of the *Henrietta Marie* is that she is an essential part of recovering the black experience - symbolically, metaphorically and in reality." Dr Colin Palmer



ARCHAEOLOGY SCHOOLS



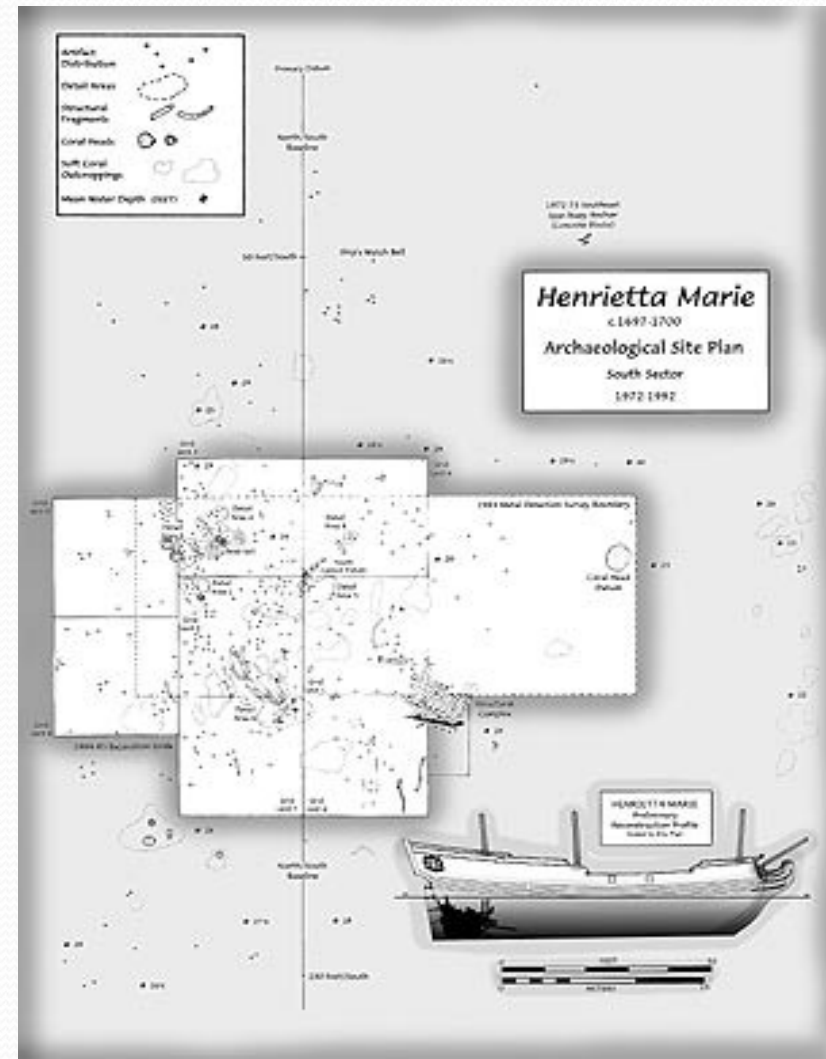
Discovery of the *Henrietta Marie*

- 1972-3 Wreck found by a company looking for wrecks of Spanish **treasure ships** in the Caribbean sea
- In 1983 archaeologist David Moore identified the wreck— because the bell was found, with the ship's name on it
- <http://www.wvculture.org/museum/Marie/henrietta.pdf>

(Note for teachers/parents - this link takes you to an information pack containing some good pupil tasks)



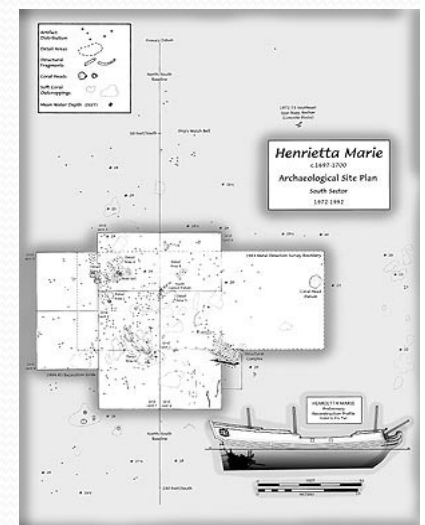
- ***Henrietta Marie* is the only identified British slave ship wreck**
- This is the **dive plan** – a plan showing where all the parts of the wreck were scattered on the seabed



Finds from the wreck - what are they?



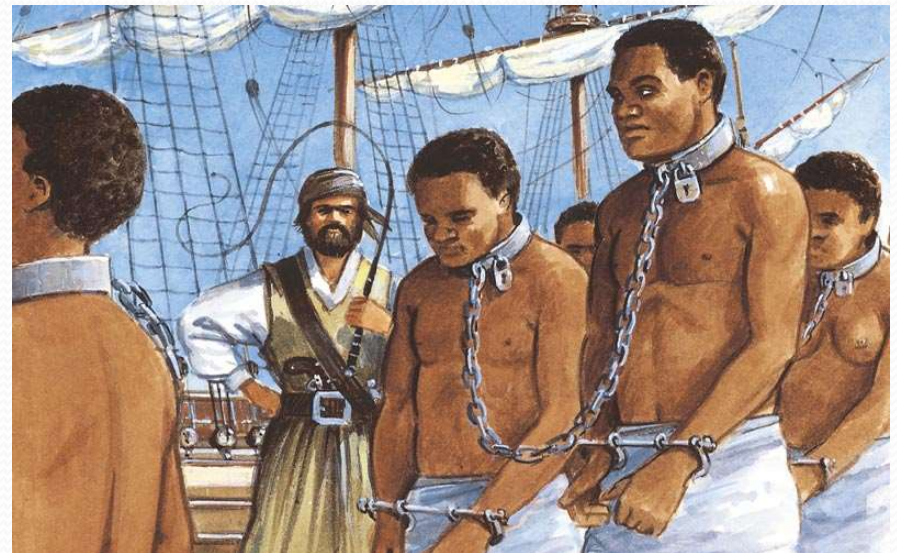
Finds from the wreck - what are they?



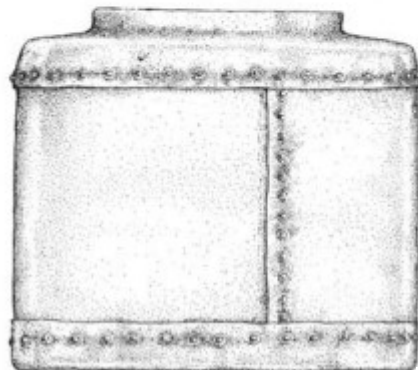
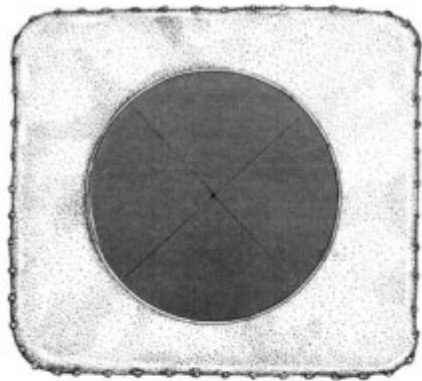
What are these objects?



- **Bilboes** (double shackles) – parts from 80 found -enough to hold more than 160 people
- How they work: two U-shaped shackles fit over the ankles or wrists of the slaves
- Various sizes – different workshops made them
- Some had cord around them – maybe to prevent chaffing when worn for a long time
- Some were small enough for children

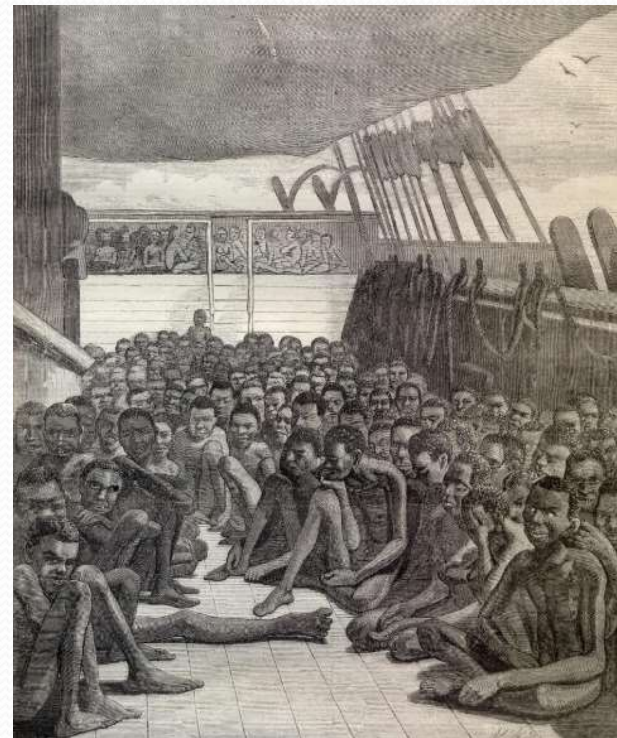


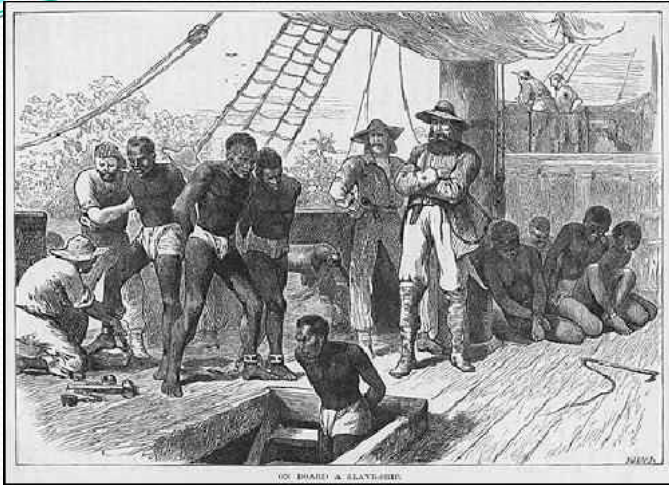
WHAT MIGHT THESE HAVE BEEN USED FOR?



COOKING CAULDRONS

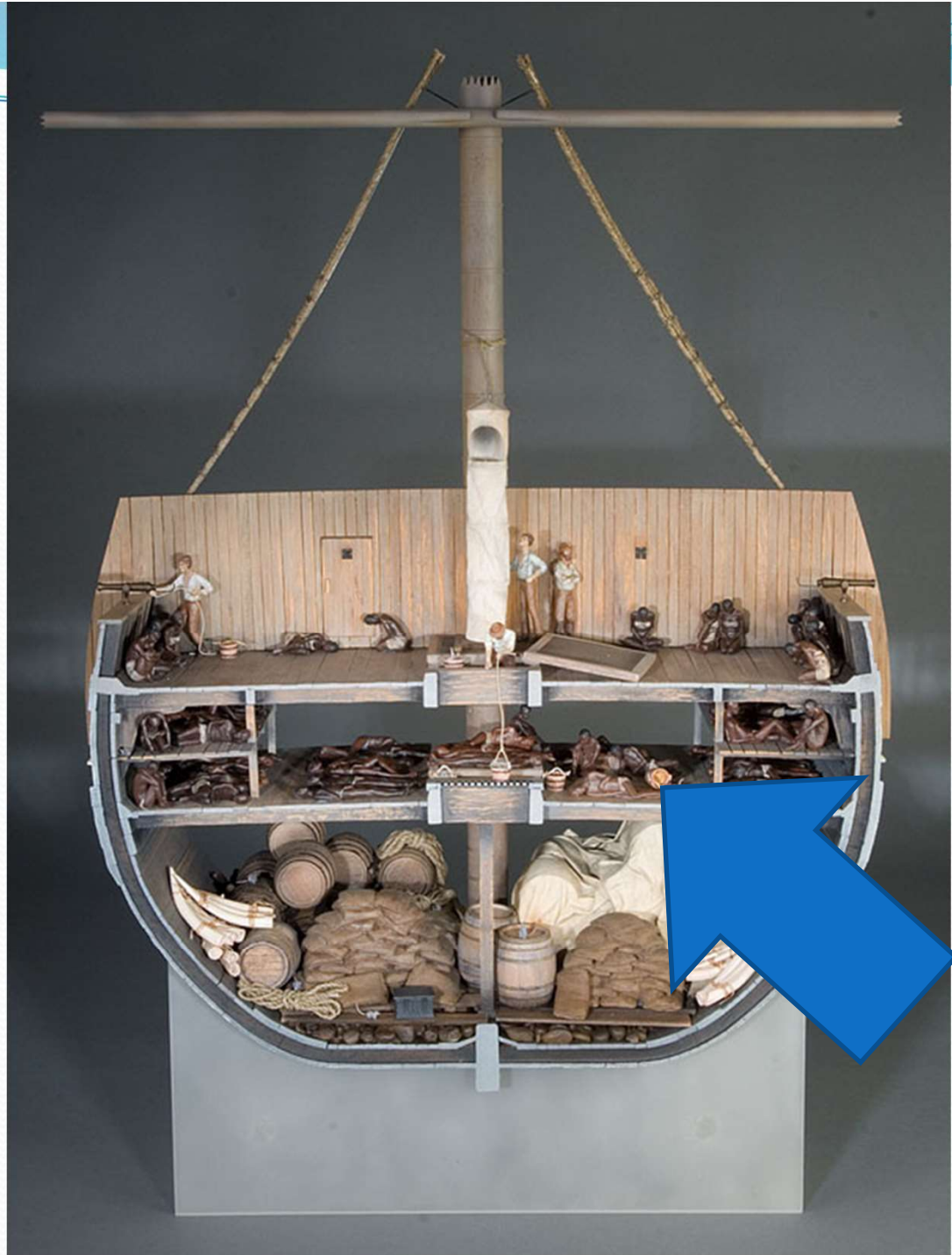
- 2 copper cauldrons
- Used as cooking vessels aboard the ship
- Differences between the cauldrons shows each carried to accommodate for the differences in people on board
- Holds large amount of food for 200+ Africans
- Small cauldron probably used for the crew



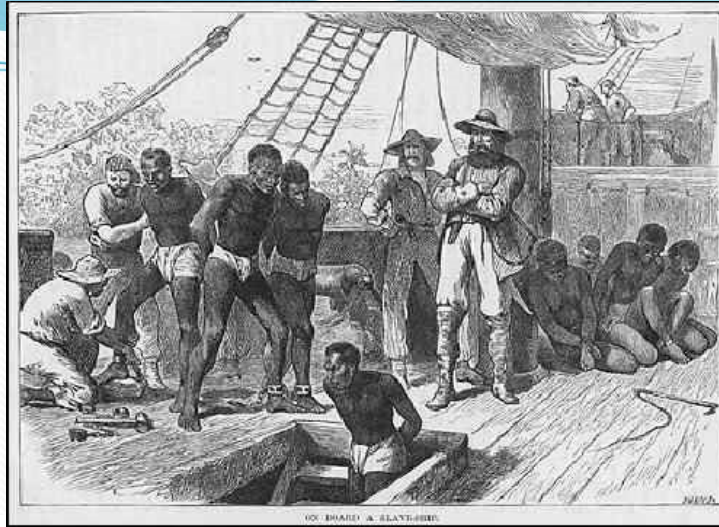


The 'slave deck':

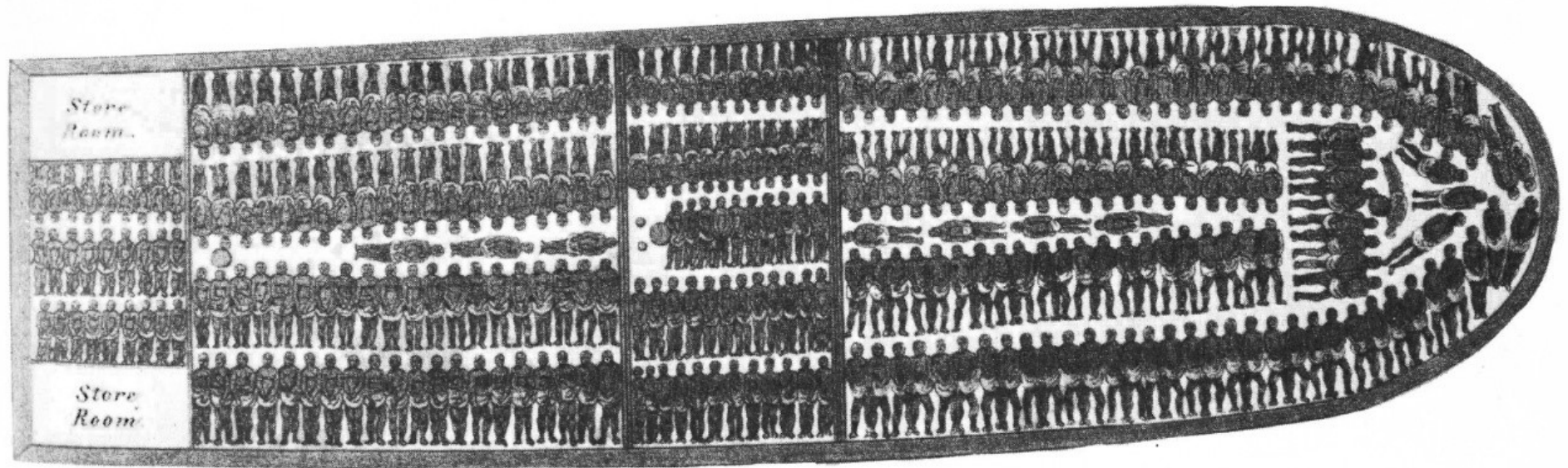
- the space where captives spent most of the voyage



Where are the
bathrooms?

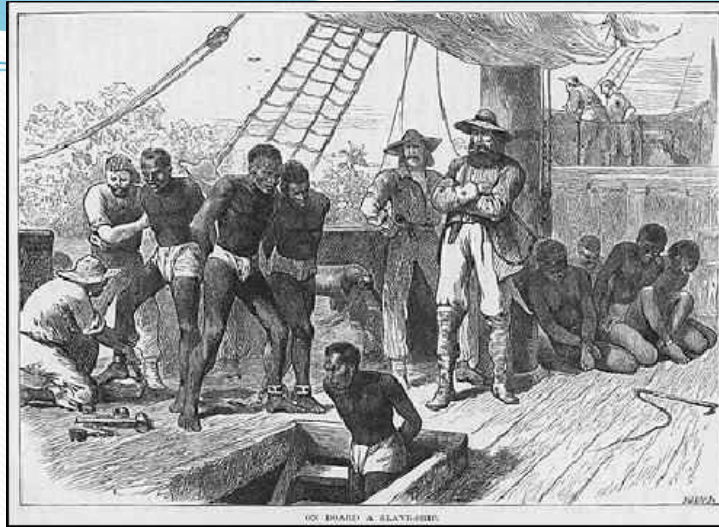


What did
people sleep
on?

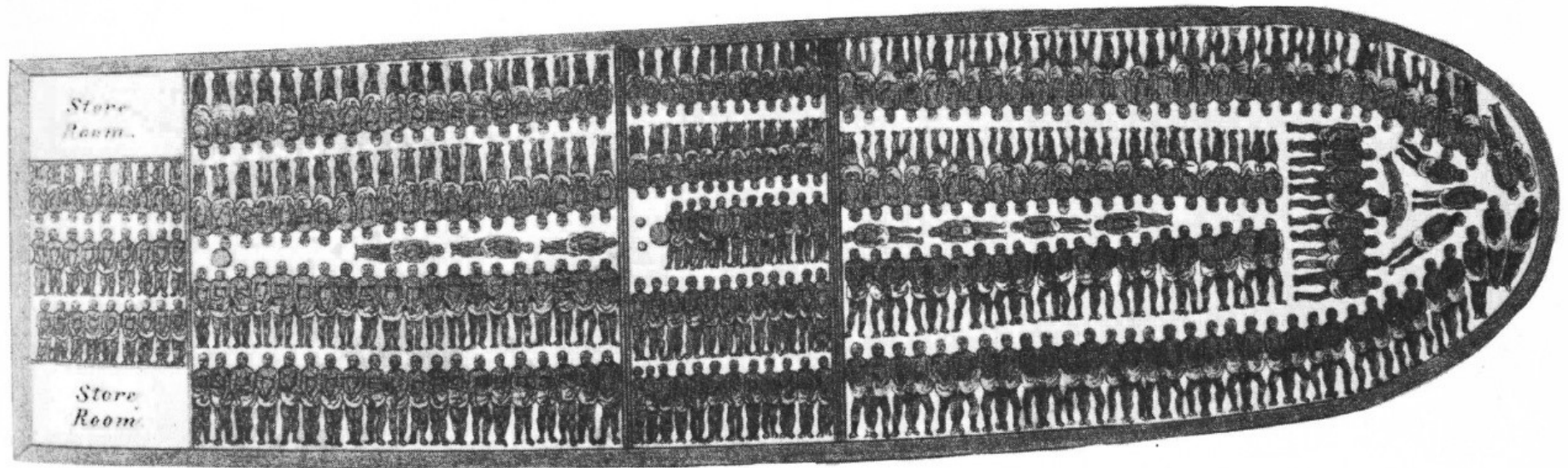


The captives spent every night (and a lot of the day) on the 'slave deck'. Conditions down there were very crowded, very hot, and filthy

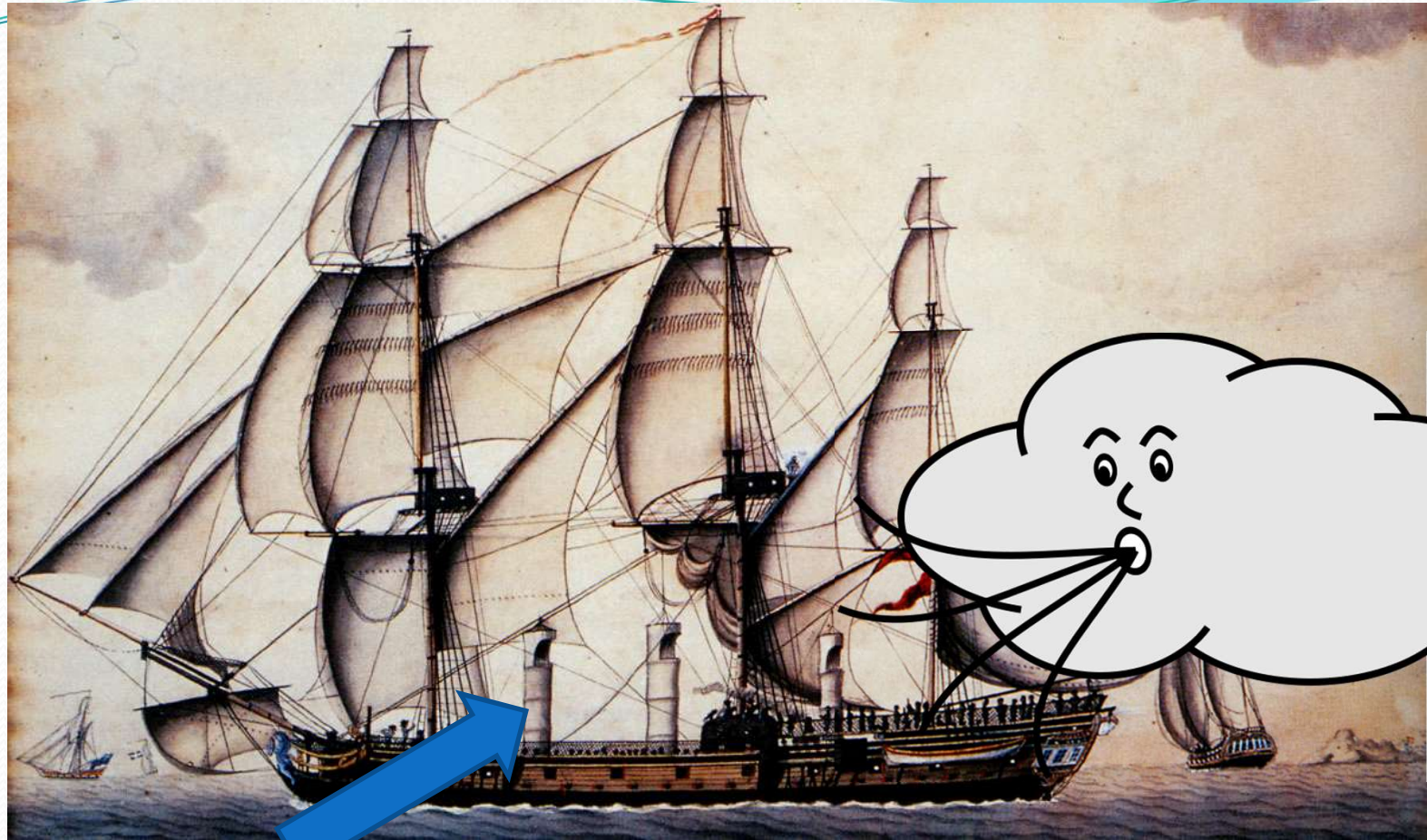
There are no
bathrooms –
just buckets
placed on the
floor



People lay on
the bare deck
timbers



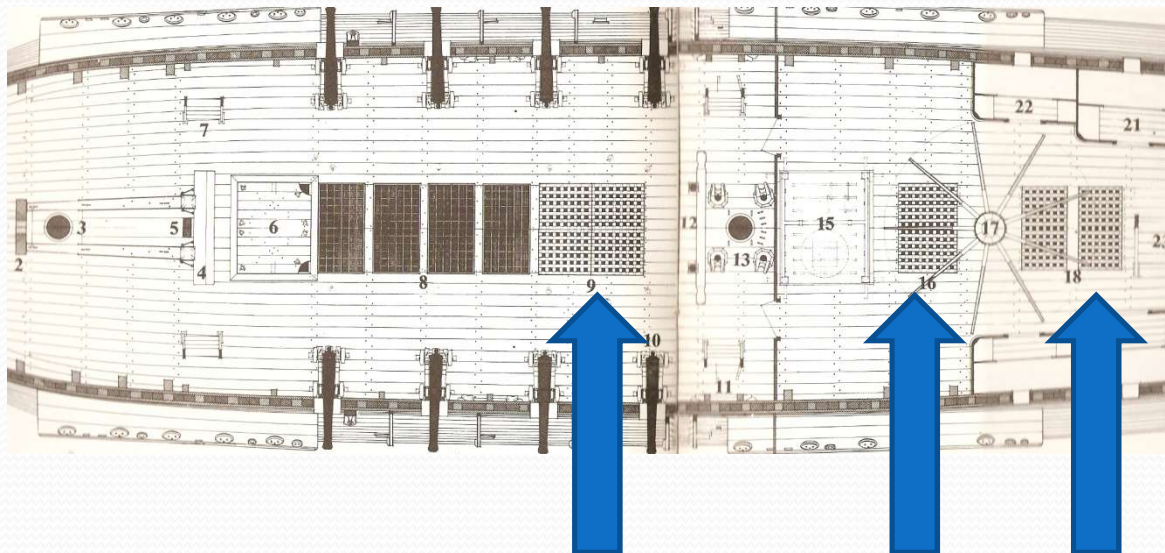
The captives spent a lot of time on the 'slave deck'.
Conditions down there were very crowded, very hot,
and filthy



WINDSAIL – supposed to funnel air down to the ‘slave decks’ but did not work very well



GRATINGS
-hatchways
with small
holes: the
only way on
many ships
that any air
got down to
the 'slave
decks'

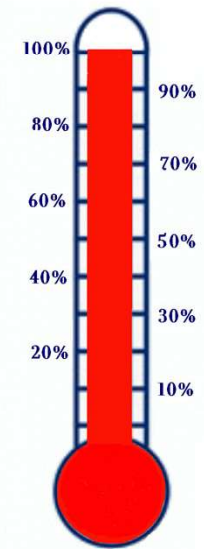


- Iron grating from the wreck of the *James Matthews*, a Portuguese slave shipwreck. The holes in the grating are only 57mm x 42mm.



THAT'S TINY !!!

How hot did it get?



What's
your
guess?

Thomas Trotter

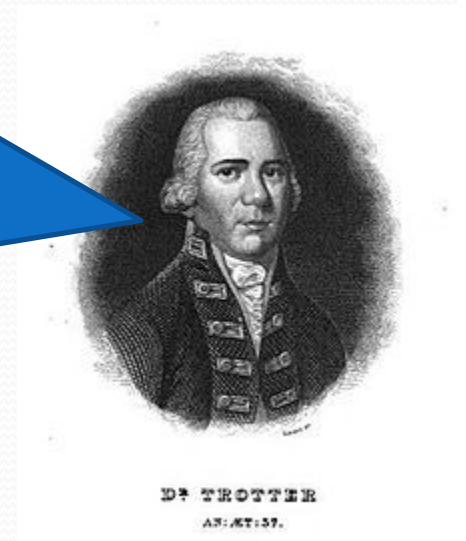
Doctor on a slave ship, writing in 1792

The gratings are also half covered when it blows hard, to keep out the salt spray or rain.

The temperature in these apartments, when they became crowded, was sometimes above 96° on Fahrenheit's scale.

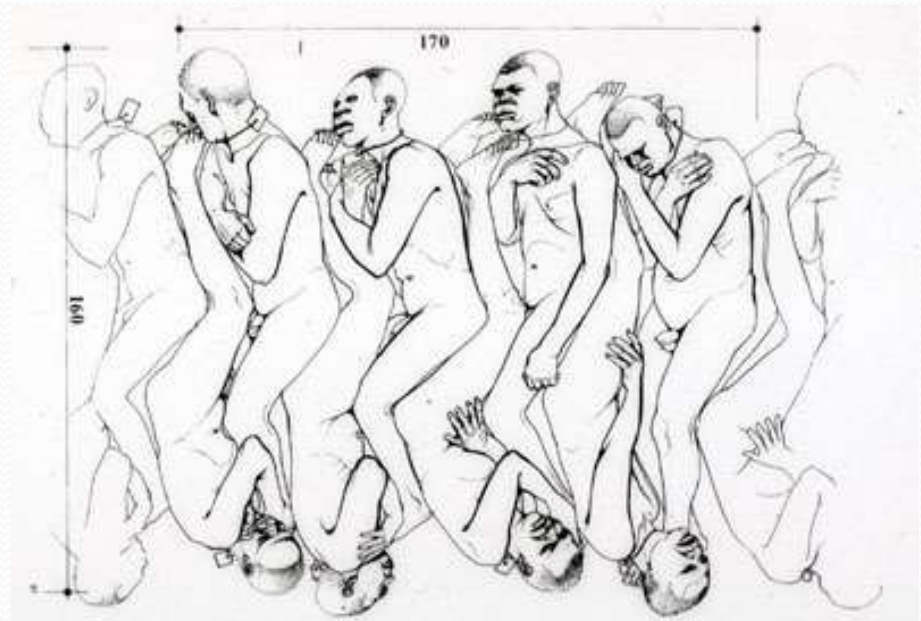
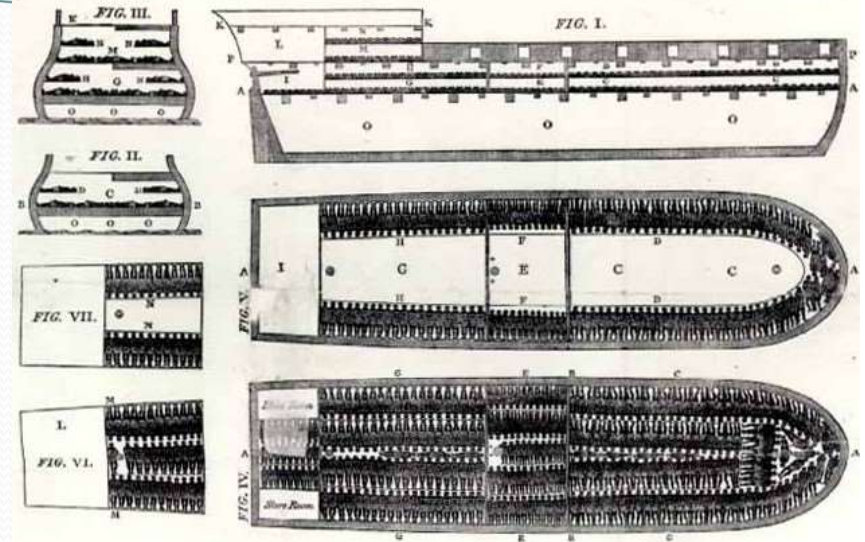
I, myself, could never breathe there, unless under the hatchway

That's 35.5°C – the hottest day in England last year was 32.4



Space below decks

- Slaves on deck in the daytime – below deck at night and in bad weather
- Most adults made the journey into slavery lying in a space 177 cm x 37cm
- The width of this space was so small that slaves were laid head to toe ('spoonwise')





What have we found out?

- Underwater archaeology provides lots of information about:
 - The appearance of slave ships
 - The conditions on board them
 - BUT.....
 - It is really expensive to do...
 - ..and it is really hard to locate ships successfully
- Archaeology needs to be used alongside documentary history to get the best understanding of slave ships